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This conference report, which includes the findings of the Bank Street College of Education survey on the use of paraprofessionals in education, traces the development of paraprofessionals in the classroom from the Depression era until the present time. While their early use was seen as an aide to the teacher, recent use is seen as part of an anti-poverty strategy whereby low income, minimally-educated auxiliaries may increase their self concept by serving as role models for the disadvantaged. Preliminary results of a survey now being conducted by the Office of Education indicate that in 1968 there were more than 57,000 teacher aides at work in the public schools. Recommendations of the Bank Street study are summarized according to five basic study premises, each of which seeks to increase involvement of paraprofessionals in the educational system for the contribution they can make to education, to their local communities, and to their own career development. (CJ)

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Background Information

National Conference on the Paraprofessional, Career Advancement, and Pupil Learning

Co-sponsored by National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards for the National Education Association and the New Careers Development Center, School of Education, New York University.

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The use of para-professionals in the classroom is neither new nor unique. Under the National Youth Administration, as part of Depression employment efforts, out-of-school youth as well as potential school drop-outs were trained and placed in the fields of health, education, recreation, welfare, correction and the arts. The 1940 report of the National Youth Administration showed some 13,000 persons so employed.

The modern teacher aide efforts began with the Ford Foundation funded program in Bay City, Michigan, in 1952. Several authors soon were identifying differential functions within teaching - for example Trump's six categories of professional, para-professional assistant, clerk, general aide, community consultant, and staff specialist, while others were visualizing a team approach. A decade after the Bay City project began, the situation could be summarized "In 1964, it is rare to find discussion of utilization of school personnel in which non-professionals are not considered a welcome addition."

It is only in the early 1960's, however, that the use of para-professionals was seen as part of an anti-poverty strategy and a restructuring of educational services, as well as its earlier use as an aide to the professional. Programs funded under the President's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency - notably New York City's Mobilization for Youth - marked this new focus in the use of para-professionals, a pattern sharply accelerated under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. In addition to the use of aides in classroom situations, effective uses of aides have been made in adult literacy courses, and in tutoring of students with learning difficulties by high school students who themselves had reading problems.

The Effect of The Use of Aides

The most extensive study of the use of para-professionals in education was done of fifteen programs across the country by the Bank Street College of Education. The central findings of this study were:

- Low income auxiliaries with minimum education appeared to be capable of assisting with the learning - teaching process in the classroom with benefits to the pupils, particularly when the auxiliaries were carefully trained and selected.

- This meaningful occupational role for low income, educationally disadvantaged persons often appeared to have a positive impact upon their familial and community roles, as well as upon their self-concept.

- Auxiliaries often appeared to serve as role models for disadvantaged pupils.

- Many teachers who participated in the program reported that they perceived their own roles in new perspectives after working with aides in the classroom. This new role was seen as additive rather than as a substitute for teacher-pupil interaction.

- A salient outcome was that all concerned - administrators, supervisors, teachers, and ancillary personnel had to rethink their roles and relationships when aides were introduced into a school system.

- In essence, the introduction of auxiliaries appeared to serve a catalytic function in the development of all roles in the school system.

Thus the use of para-professionals contributes to the learning of the children, the occupational development of the para-professional, brings school and home closer, provides a role model for the children, gives teachers a new and higher sense of their role, and provokes and catalyzes consideration of the role and function of all school personnel and indeed of the school itself.

Number of Teacher Aides Now at Work

In attempting to get some idea of the number of paid teacher aides now at work in the Nation's schools, a major problem is the differing bases on which statistics have been compiled for the two big Federal programs involving aides.

ESEA Title I -- For the school year 1966-67, the teacher aides hired under the ESEA Title I program totaled 76,040, of whom 60,080 worked full time and 15,960 part time. Statistics for this program also show the total broken down into the number of aides employed throughout the year (45,190) and the number hired for the summer only (30,850). (Of the summer employees, 25,266 worked full time and 5,590 part time. The ESEA statistical records for this year also show the proportion of non-professional employees who were working as janitors or in some other capacity than that of teacher aides as 12.3 percent of the total non-professional employees hired under Title I.)

Head Start -- This 12.3 percentage figure is useful when it comes to attempting an estimate of teacher aides for the year 1966-67 hired under the Head Start program. Here the recorded statistics were not broken down into teacher aides and other nonprofessional employees but showed only an approximate overall total of 90,000 for both categories taken together, including both summer and academic year. It is possible to attempt a rough estimate of the number of teacher aides involved by applying the 12.3 percentage figure that held good for the ESEA Title I program. This suggests that the total figure for teacher aides may have been somewhat less than 79,000. The Head Start total of 90,000 was

broken down into 31,000 for the year 1966-67 and 58,000 for the summer only. Again applying the 12.3 percentage figure by analogy with Title I, this seems to suggest that the salaries of more than 27,000 teacher aides were funded under Head Start for the year, and of more than 51,000 for the summer.

No statistics are available for the number of teacher aides paid by local educational agencies from their own, rather than Federal, funds.

Statistics are not yet available for the year 1967-68 for either the Head Start or the Title I program. But the preliminary results of a survey now being conducted by the USOE indicate that in the spring of 1968 there were between 57,000 and 58,000 teacher aides at work in the public schools. This figure includes all salaried aides, whether paid with Federal or non-Federal funds, and is subject to correction when the survey is complete. It indicates the total in full-time equivalents. It does not, of course, include any auxiliaries hired for the summer only.

Program Issues

The Bank Street study summarized its recommendations according to five basic premises of their study -

Premise #1

> "That the involvement of persons with a wide range of skills, training, experience, background, and potential may provide a better learning environment than the assignment of all educational tasks in a classroom to one person who, alone, must attempt to meet the individual needs of many pupils."

In order to involve persons with a wide range of skills, training, experience and background in the learning envrionment in such a manner as to realize their maximum potential, the following practices are highly recommended:

1) That the role of auxiliaries be two-fold, including both (a) sharing of routine tasks and (b) providing personalized attention and assistance to pupils.

2) That there be team training of auxiliaries and the professionals with whom they work, part of such training to be for each group separately and part of it for auxiliaries and professionals <u>together</u>, as they develop new roles and relationships.

3) That training include preservice orientation of all concerned including administrators, parents and pupils, as well as inservice training which is continuing, comprehensive, and available on a work-study basis.

4) That role definition should not be so rigid as to preclude role development. Role definition may provide limits, but within those limits there should be flexibility so that each professional-auxiliary team may develop roles which fit their particular situation.

5) That time be scheduled for each professional-auxiliary team to review their experiences and plan together.

6) That a coach-counselor-trainer-supervisor be appointed to be responsible and accountable for the auxiliary program in each school where a sizeable number of such personnel are employed. The role of the coach would be to develop both the program and the people involved in it, to handle administrative matters, to provide liaison between the auxiliaries and the school authorities, to handle grievances, and generally to serve as the advocate of the auxiliary within a given school.

Premise #2

> "That participation in the learning-teaching process of persons from the neighborhood served by the school, particularly parents, may increase home-school-child interaction."

To encourage meaningful participation in the learning-teaching process by persons from the neighborhood served by the school, particularly in disadvantaged areas, it is recommended:

1) That selection criteria and procedures be designed to discover latent talent; to "screen in", rather than "screen out" those who have lacked opportunity and/or incentive to develop their potential thus far, and to identify those human qualities which studies have shown are more likely to be predictive of success as an auxiliary than the number of years of prior schooling.

2) That, although those who are employed with anti-poverty funds must be at or below the poverty level, a person should not be employed simply because he is poor but only if he appears to posess those personal traits which are deemed important in wholesome and constructive relations with children and youth. This recommendation is consistent with the primary goal of any educational program, i.e. to improve the quality of education.

3) That parents of children enrolled in the school be sought out as potential auxiliaries so as to help in making the style of life in home and school more harmonious, help the parents in understanding and contributing to the school's educational goals for children, help school people understand how parents view the school and also discover more about the children's learning needs, and finally, facilitate communication between the school and other parents in the community.

Premise #3

> "That broad community involvement in planning educational programs

may contribute materially to the social relevance of such planning -- i.e. relevance to the needs, interests and real concerns of the school population."

To achieve broad community involvement in planning, it is recommended:

1) That a School-College-Community Advisory Committee be appointed by the administrator of the sponsoring institution(s) of every auxiliary program, to advise on this program alone, rather than using an existing group which may give low priority to career development for auxiliaries.

2) That such a committee include school personnel at all levels, including auxiliary personnel; representatives of institutions of higher learning and other institutions, agencies or projects which offer comprehensive training programs for auxiliaries; and a sufficient representation of parents not employed in the school and of community representatives so that they have a sense of true participation.

3) That the initial functions of such committees be to assist in clarifying goals, identifying problems, and spelling out specific strategies to move toward the goals and cope with the problems.

4) That the committees serve thereafter as a mechanism for continuing dialogue among the various groups concerned with career development for auxiliaries.

5) That the recommendations of such committees be given sincere and thoughtful consideration in a climate wherein there exist: (a) balance of power, (b) mutual respect, and (c) a willingness on both sides to give a bit -- the essentials of successful negotiation.

Premise #4

"That the opportunity of career development for auxiliaries may serve to motivate them in two distinct but interrelated ways: (a) in terms of their personal growth and ability to cope with life situations; (b) in terms of their increased competence on the job."

In order to motivate auxiliaries toward personal growth and increased competence on the job, it is recommended:

1) That an occupational track be established for auxiliaries with fixed line items in the budget for each occupational level, alternate routes from nonprofessional to professional roles, annual salary, tenure, increments, social security, fringe benefits, and the availability of training on a work-study basis leading to advancement.

2) That upward mobility be possible for those who have the ability and the desire to advance on the job, but not compulsary. There should be recognition and respect for the dignity and validity of every

task at every level. Even at the entry level, jobs should be meaningful in terms of the basic goals of education.

3) That an overall plan be developed, so that working conditions and compensation will be comparable in all areas where auxiliaries are utilized, such as: instruction, guidance, home-school interaction, library, and general school services.

4) That the right of incumbents to promotional opportunity be protected, when new programs and new recruitment procedures are instituted.

Premise #5

"That the establishment of a new career line for auxiliaries may foster career development for the total educational enterprise, with new leadership roles at various occupational levels and increased motivation for professional growth throughout the system."

To foster career development for the total educational enterprise, it is recommended:

1) That the concept of career development be accepted as an overall objective in education, not limited to any one group or category of school personnel.

2) That planning in depth be instituted so as to move toward that objective.

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